

Wycombe Wanderers 4, Banbury United 2

NOT since last year have Wycombe Wanderers produced the type of football displayed at Loakes Park on Thursday evening, their home-grown, fast moving game taking them to a spectacular victory over Banbury United.

There were only two disappointments in this highly entertaining encounter. Firstly, a meagre crowd of only 405 people attended — and those who stayed away certainly missed out. Secondly, the performance of Kevin Raine spoilt what could have been a most emphatic victory, the goalkeeper presenting United with both their goals.

It was definitely an "off night" for Kevin but this was more than balanced by the performance of the front runners and midfield men. The last time Tony Horseman and Keith Searle teamed up together was way back against St. Albans on November 13. They were back in harness again on Thursday and the effect was considerable.

Between them they scored three of the goals — but that wasn't all. They gave the forward line a completely different look. Searle's ability in the air took a good deal of pressure off Steve Perrin, who benefited considerably, while Horseman's positioning and deadly finish had the Banbury defence in real trouble.

Once or twice Wycombe's finishing was off target, notably when Holifield burst through and blazed the ball wide with only Thomas to beat from a narrow angle. But the chances were being created in abundance and in the 34th minute Wanderers went ahead. The eagle eye of the linesman spotted Thomas fractionally out of his area when taking a goal-kick and Denham referee Daryl Reeves immediately awarded the direct free-kick on the edge of the box. Tony Horseman, so effective in this situation, bent the ball around the defensive wall and wide of Thomas with a superb shot.

In the 40th minute Wycombe went two up with a great goal. Reardon fed Holifield who used his pace to outstrip Paul Svenson. He slipped the ball inside to Perrin who chipped over keeper

Thomas to Searle. Keith was in just the right position to tuck home his first goal for nearly six months.

Just before the break, Raine, who had been out of action for much of the half, could only push Jim Hastie's corner onto the crossbar, the ball bobbling out for full-back Bob Haynes to bundle home at the far post. Then, within five minutes of the second half, the score stood at 3-2.

In only the second minute, Mick Holifield combined with Perrin and completely foxed the Banbury defence. Mick drew Thomas with ease before slotting home. Sixty seconds later, Banbury pulled back another goal. Raine fumbled Alistair Unitt's cross and Jacques was there to slot home the mistake.

After such hectic activity early on, the tempo understandably slowed later on, although there were goal opportunities at both ends, with Unitt and Jacques always looking for the breakaways. But any hopes Banbury might have held of an equaliser were dispelled in the 87th minute.

It was a beautifully engineered goal and a classic example of the Searle-Horseman spearhead worked to perfection. Paul Birdseye, who enjoyed a fine game at full-back, crossed deep into the United area where he found Searle unattended. Anticipating Horseman's position, Keith simply nodded the ball into Bodger's path and Thomas had no chance with the finishing shot. It was a fitting end to an excellent game.

WYCOMBE: K. Raine; P. Birdseye, P. Wood, D. Bullock, R. Grant; L. Pritchard, T. Reardon (sub. K. Mead 50 mins.), M. Holifield; A. Horseman, K. Searle, S. Perrin. Sub. D. Evans (not used).

BANBURY: M. Thomas; P. Svenson, B. Haynes, D. Matthews, K. Butler (sub. A. Unitt 45 mins.), J. Cassidy, R. Archibald, P. Duester; A. Jacques, A. Pollard, J. Hastie. Sub. G. Devonshire (not used).

Referee: D. Reeves (new Denham).

Magpies return

WYCOMBE Wanderers continue their Premier Midweek Floodlight League Section A programme on Monday night with a return visit to Maidenhead United at York Road. The match at Loakes Park in October ended in a 2-2 draw with Tony Horseman and Mick Chatterton scoring all four goals between them.

United, however, have now lost the services of Chatterton, who recently signed for Enfield. Dave Kemp, their other top marksman, also left to join Slough Town.

The Maidenhead side is likely to include several former Marlow players, who joined the club with manager Mike Hall last season. Ron Seary, Pete Johnson, Dave Woolley and Vince Faulkner all played for Marlow. Faulkner also spent several seasons at Loakes Park as a utility man. He now plays as centre-half for the Magpies.